



Federal Disaster Assistance

Emergency Management Division
Washington Military Department

Obtaining Federal Aid For Recovery Efforts

When damage from an event is so great it exceeds the capability of local and state government or Indian Tribes to repair, the Governor can ask the President to declare an emergency or a major disaster in the affected areas. A declaration by the President makes a variety of federal assistance programs available to help restore communities.

Damage Assessment Process

There are three basic steps to obtaining a major disaster declaration:

- 1) Local governments, special purpose districts, and Indian Tribes conduct an inventory of damage to public facilities such as roads, bridges, utilities, and parks. County emergency management offices collect information from homeowners and businesses about uninsured damages and send it to the Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division (EMD), to plan how many and what type of damage assessment teams are needed and where.
- 2) Joint teams organized by EMD, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the affected jurisdiction(s) conduct preliminary damage assessments. These teams determine the extent and initial cost estimates for the damages. Teams assess damage to individuals, farms, and small businesses, as well as damage to public facilities.
- 3) The information collected helps the Governor decide whether the recovery effort is beyond the capability of local and state government. If this is the case, the Governor can request an emergency or major disaster declaration from the President. The Governor's request is sent to the President through the FEMA Region X office in Bothell.

If the President declares an emergency or a major disaster, federal assistance becomes available to affected communities through the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended.

The Governor may decide a declaration from the President is neither necessary, nor appropriate. In these cases, the Governor may make a request for other federal assistance. Typically, these are programs through either the United States Small Business Administration or the United States Department of Agriculture.

When a request for federal disaster assistance is denied, the cost of recovery is borne by the affected individuals, businesses, farmers and ranchers, local governments, Indian Tribes, and state government.

Contact

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